

Relevancy for the Military Police

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Relevancy for the Military Police

Contemporary Issues Paper

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"By transforming our military, we will make our Armed Forces faster, more agile and more lethal - and we will make them more effective in helping societies transition from war and despotism to freedom and democracy. To give our military more resources for this vital work, we are rebalancing our forces -- moving people out of skills that are in low demand, such as heavy artillery, and adding more military police and civil affairs specialists that are needed in these types of situations."

-President George W. Bush,  
Remarks at an International Republican  
Institute Dinner, Renaissance Hotel,  
Washington, DC, May 17, 2005

"[W]e are moving forces out of low demand specialties, such as heavy artillery, and into high-demand capabilities such as military police, civil affairs, and special operations forces."

-Secretary of Defense, Donald  
H. Rumsfeld, statement given before the  
Committee on Armed Services, United  
States House of Representative, February  
2004

"Transformation is not simply applying new technology to old ways of doing business. Transformation requires cultural change, new ways of thinking about problems, and changes in how we organize and train."

-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs  
of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, USAF,  
Posture Statement before the House Armed  
Services Committee, February 2005

In the current operating environment where Stability and Support Operations (SASO) and Civil-Military Operations (CMO) take center stage, Military Police (MP)<sup>1</sup> skill sets and the battlefield missions they perform are essential. The subsequent lawlessness throughout the country of Iraq following the fall of the Saddam Hussein Regime after Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and the current Counter Insurgency Operations (COIN) being conducted by US Armed Forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan have further validated this requirement. However, the ability of Marine Corps MP assets to be a significant force multiplier across the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) spectrum has been limited by inadequate, disparate and ineffective organizational constructs, coupled with a general lack of understanding of MP capabilities within the Ground Combat Element (GCE) of the MAGTF.

The most senior civilian and military leadership in this country - the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) have all directed a transformation of the military services to better meet the challenges confronting it today.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, other services are currently taking enormous steps to re-balance their forces, particularly in the military police (US Army), Security

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<sup>1</sup> MP will be used throughout representing singulars, plurals, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See the first page for quotes and the bibliography page.

Forces (US Air Force), and Master-at-Arms (US Navy) programs. It is time for the Marine Corps to do likewise.

### **Why the Military Police? Capabilities that meet requirements.**

Successful peace operations, including SASO, rely heavily upon specific skill sets. Skills that facilitate the transition from full-fledged combat operations to operations that provide the local population with "security, stability, safety, and the assurance that law enforcement and judicial processes are transparent and provide the same protections and penalties for all citizens."<sup>3</sup> Some of the skills required include conducting mobile patrols (often times with local law-enforcement), providing security for critical assets and lines of communication (LOCs), operating personnel and vehicular checkpoints, providing anti-terrorism/force protection measures, handling detainees and displaced civilians, and conducting investigations. More importantly however, is the requirement for these operations to be accomplished while maintaining a mindset and ability to de-escalate dangerous situations and still retain an offensive capability if the situation requires. The military police battlefield functions listed in the chart below encompass all of these required skill sets (Figure 1).

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<sup>3</sup> Kimberly C. Fields and Robert M. Perito, "Creating a Force for Peace Operations: Ensuring Stability with Justice" Parameters, Winter 2002-2003, pp. 77-87

## Military Police Functions

- **Area Security**
  - Foot and Mobile Patrolling
  - LOC/MSR security
  - Critical Site/Facility security
  - Checkpoint Operations
    - VCP/SVCP
  - Quick Reaction Force
  - AT/FP Operations
- **Law and Order**
  - Law Enforcement
  - Riot/Crowd Control
  - Criminal Investigations
  - Customs Operations
  - Military Working Dogs
  - Law and Order Training
- **Maneuver, Mobility Support**
  - Route Reconnaissance and Surveillance
  - MSR regulation and enforcement
  - Straggler and dislocated civilian control
  - Support to River Crossing, Breaching and Passage of Lines Operations
- **Internment/Resettlement Operations**
  - EPW handling
  - US Prisoner handling
  - Dislocated Civilian control
  - Populace and resource control

Figure 1

As important as these functions are, the interpersonal and escalation of force training the military police receive is equally, if not more important and especially relevant in a SASO/CMO environment. From the first training day at the Military Police School, MP train to interact with civilians, focusing on the ability to establish trust and use mediation and other conflict resolution techniques to resolve disputes. Like civilian police officers, MP operate on a force continuum, using only the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve incidents and conflict but still retain the capability to escalate force if necessary.<sup>4</sup> The result is a military force that is more comfortable than strictly combat forces with a military mission in which the measure of effectiveness (MOE) is not gauged by the

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<sup>4</sup> The standard MP platoon is equipped with hard-back HMMWVs, each with a crew-served weapons platform; either a .50 cal, MK-19 or M240G.

number of bad guys killed or pieces of equipment destroyed, but rather by the establishment of a secure environment where the rule of law is the norm. In simpler words, because of the training they receive, MP are comfortable in a situation where stability is the MOE.

Although capable of conducting combat operations when needed, the MP are highly practiced in de-escalation and in employing the minimum essential force to contain potentially violent situations. This mind-set serves as the framework for MP law-enforcement training and is especially applicable in MP support for stability and support operations.<sup>5</sup>

#### **CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Following the end of major combat operations in OIF (Phase III, Decisive Operations), the focus of effort shifted to the return of public order, and the establishment of a secure environment and the rule of law (Phase IV, Stability Operations). There has been much written concerning the inadequacies of the force assigned the mission of providing security in post-war Iraq. The most notable and prevalent argument, the one that prompted the senior leadership's mandate to transform the services, has been the lack of specialist personnel needed to conduct these types of peace operations successfully such as military police, civil affairs and Psychological Operations (PsyOps) personnel.

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<sup>5</sup> *Military Police Operations, FM 3-19.1, U.S. Army Field Manual, Washington DC, 2002*

Emphasizing this shortfall is the fact that the theater requirement for military police has increased with every rotation to Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Because of this requirement, military police across all services have some of the highest rates of deployment tempo in all of the Department of Defense.<sup>7</sup> As an example, since returning home from deployment to OIF in July of 2003, Alpha and Bravo Companies of the 2d Military Police Bn have been on a continuous seven month deployed/five month home rotation that will continue for the upcoming rotations. The same holds true for the MP companies at the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Logistics Group. This trend spans across all of the services and will remain as long as there are troops in Iraq. The difference, however, is in how each of the services responds to this requirement.

#### **US ARMY SENIOR LEADERSHIP: A DIFFERENT VIEW ON MILITARY POLICE**

In response to the senior level directives for force transformation, the US Army has begun transforming their MP forces. Over the next six years the overall MP force, both active and reserve, will increase from 42,000 to 68,000.<sup>8</sup> Active MP forces will increase by five battalions and thirteen

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<sup>6</sup> The author's previous billet before attending EWS was as an action officer at HQMC, Plans, Policies and Operations (Security Division). In this billet, the author represented the Marine Corps Military Police at the Joint Staff Force Sourcing Conferences for OIFs II, 04-06 and 05-07.

<sup>7</sup> Fields and Perito, "Creating a Force for Peace Operations: Ensuring Stability with Justice" pp. 77-87

<sup>8</sup> Brigadier General Rodney L. Johnson, Commandant, United States Army Military Police School and Chief, Military Police Corps Regiment. Military Police Bulletin, 19-05-02, pg 1.



companies.<sup>9</sup> Both active and reserve military police forces within the Army will standardize platoon and company sized formations, furthering modularity and facilitating the task organization process within the overall Army transformation process.

Along with personnel changes, the Army is purchasing 872 Armored Security Vehicles (ASVs<sup>10</sup>) for MP forces and plans to field the Movement Tracking System (MTS<sup>11</sup>) in one out of every two MP vehicles. The take-away here is that somewhere down the line, senior Army leadership in their ground combat element or infantry forces, grasped the force multiplier concept and realized the critical contributions that their military police forces bring to the overall fight. Through this realization, a shift in the way Army military police were organized, trained, equipped, and fought took place. The emphasis for the military police in the Army became warfighting not just installation security.

#### **USMC VIEWPOINT**

Current military police organizational differences between the East and West Coast Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) only

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<sup>9</sup> LtCol Eric Belcher, "Military Police Transformation". Military Police Bulletin, PB 19-05-1, pp. 15-17.

<sup>10</sup> The ASV is the Army's four-wheeled version of the USMC Light Armored Vehicle (LAV). It is equipped with coaxial heavy and medium machine guns and is manned by a crew of three MPs.

<sup>11</sup> The MTS is a vehicle-mounted, satellite-based, two-way text messaging and position navigation system that provides a communications, command and control, and global positioning and tracking capability from the theater level to the individual driver; much like the Blue-Force Tracking System.

highlight the differences in institutional thinking between the services. While other services embrace senior leadership mandates to re-organize their forces to better accomplish SASO/CMO type missions, the Marine Corps has floundered for the last four years trying to decide whether to consolidate operational MPs into Battalions at each MEF, and increase military police structure to meet operational requirements.<sup>12</sup> While individual unit commanders at the Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs) argue over rice-bowl issues of retaining "my MPs", the MEF leadership currently fighting in theater praised the MP Bn's efforts in theater and felt the Battalion construct should be implemented Marine Corps wide. This "value-added" to the MAGTF was due to the flexibility the Bn provided by allowing the MAGTF commander to focus limited assets on overall priorities rather than MSC priorities<sup>13</sup>.

As large and relevant as the organizational issues are within the military police community, an equally large hurdle is the lack of knowledge among the leadership within the GCE on military police capabilities. However, this lack of knowledge can be largely attributed to a "cop before Marine" mindset prevalent among the military police community in the past. This

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<sup>12</sup>Originally conceived as a two-year proof of concept (POC) test, the 2d Military Police Bn activated in October of 2001 by consolidating all operational MP assets within II MEF into a Bn under the 2d FSSG.

<sup>13</sup> Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned. "2d Military Police Bn Proof of Concept Test: A Summary of Observations, Interviews and Relevant Documents from OIF 04-06.1. 27 July 2005.

mindset was and is currently fostered in large part to those disparate and ineffective T/Os at the operating force MP companies. In the current construct, the senior Marines leading MP units within the MEFs are Captains. Once an MP Officer is promoted to the rank of Major or above, that MP Officer's opportunities at leading Marines in an expeditionary environment are over.

The realization of this mindset is not new, but it has significantly contributed to the lack of understanding of MP capabilities throughout the Marine Corps as noted in the following article by LtCol Gordon Broussard:

Part of the blame rests with the military police community, which has not done a good job in promoting its capabilities...[and] has not placed any emphasis on formalized instruction on MP operations at the two Marine Corps schools where future commanders and staff officer are developed: Amphibious Warfare School and Command and Staff College.<sup>14</sup>

By first changing the mindset within the military police community itself and then promoting its capabilities in formal and informal settings, much like the Army did in the 1980's, the MP community can begin the paradigm shift that is necessary to make the military police a relevant force in the eyes of commanders within the MAGTF.

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<sup>14</sup> LtCol Gordan A. Broussard, "Military Police for the MAGTF Commander", Marine Corps Gazette (February, 1994) pp 15-17

## COUNTER ARGUMENT

The argument has been made that the infantry and other ground combat arms MOSs such as artillery can learn to conduct MP-type missions, and therefore there is no need for more military police. In fact, for OIF II, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines deployed as a provisional MP Battalion.<sup>15</sup> While "provisional MPs" can be trained to conduct certain MP-type missions, they cannot operate across the full spectrum of MP functions and if they try, at what cost to overall mission accomplishment and to their own MOS credibility. The Artillery monitor discussed this very topic during a recent visit to the Expeditionary Warfare School and stated his professional concern over artillery officers who were ready to move on to B-Billets while having little MOS credibility due to deployments as provisional MPs or infantry. Capt James Flatter stated it best however, when he wrote:

Military Police Marines are ingrained with an "escalation of force" mentality...infantrymen can be taught this concept, but doing so consciously backs them away from the "gunfighter" mentality that is required in 99 percent of their missions. Expecting them to learn MP specialty skills...and then perform these missions during the deployment further taxes these already overburdened forces.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Col Thomas J. Connally and LtCol Lance A. McDaniel, "Leaving the Tubes at Home" Marine Corps Gazette, October 2005, pp. 31-35.

<sup>16</sup> Captain James R. Flatter, USMC, "Military Police: A Force of Choice for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century MEU(SOC)." Marine Corps Gazette, (July, 1997) pg. 36.

## **CONCLUSION**

The current operating environment of stability operations requires skill sets that are resident within USMC military police forces. The senior civilian and military leadership, from the Commander in Chief to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called for the transformation of the armed forces to better organize for Stability and Support Operations, Civil Military Operations and other peace-keeping contingencies. The ability to transition from warfighting to SASO and CMO requires a military force to establish a secure environment quickly where public order is instituted, allowing the local government to "provide for its own security through the rule of law."<sup>17</sup>

Marine Corps military police forces are trained and prepared to conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict and are particularly well suited for the "peacekeeping" type operating environments associated with SASO and CMO. However, MP forces cannot, nor ever will be the MAGTF force multiplier it is capable of being without the occurrence of the following:

- An institutional mindset change in the MP Community in which you have Marines that are military policeman, rather than cops that happen to be Marines. Once again, however,

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<sup>17</sup> Fields and Perito, "Creating a Force for Peace Operations: Ensuring Stability with Justice" pp. 77-87

this is largely due to the organizational construct of the military police.

- Education provided to all of the MAGTF elements with the military police promoting their capabilities: the onus of responsibility is on the community to educate senior leadership.

Once these occur, senior leadership will begin to realize the relevancy in the MP forces they have. Then and only then, will the MP community begin to see the results of their efforts with increased structure and equipment and a proper organizational construct that will further their relevancy. (Word Count-1924)

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